



The following is a transcript of an interview with former CIA deputy director Michael Morell, a CBS News national security contributor, on "Face the Nation" that aired on June 23, 2024.

MARGARET BRENNAN: We're joined now by former CIA Deputy Director, Mike Morell. He's also our CBS News senior national security contributor. Good to have you here.

MIKE MORELL: Good to be here, Margaret.

[TRANSCRIPT BEGINS AFTER COMMERCIAL BREAK]

MARGARET BRENNAN: Welcome back to Face The Nation. We return now to our conversation with CBS News senior national security contributor, Mike Morell. Mike, I want to ask you about some video that CBS broadcasted earlier this week, 60 Minutes obtained it. It's Saudi national Omar al-Bayoumi walking around the US Capitol back in 1999.



We're seeing that video now. It was shot within 90 days of the time when senior al Qaeda planners were deciding on 9/11 targets according to the FBI. At the time you were at the CIA. We know now the FBI identified this man, al-Bayoumi, as an intelligence operative with close ties to two of the 9/11 hijackers. But in that 9/11 commission report it said there was no credible evidence that he was a violent extremist or aided extremists. Now that you have seen this video, what do you think it reveals?

MIKE MORELL: No doubt in my mind, that it is a casing video, that it is a casing video for some sort of terrorist attack. Number one. Number two, pretty clear to me that al-Bayoumi was- was either working for al Qaeda, or was Al Qaeda. Did he know about the 9/11 attacks? Probably not. Did he know that the two individuals he was interacting with were 9/11 hijackers? Probably not. But- but no doubt in my mind that al Qaeda tasked him to do this casing video. The video is chilling. It's chilling in terms of what he was- what he was videotaping, his narration over the top of it which- which is part what tells you it was a casing video. And his- his- his extremist comments. Let me just give you two examples, Margaret. On- on the casing part. At one point he says I will get over, he's looking at the Washington Monument, I will get over there and I will report. I will report to you in detail what is there. He's talking to somebody, right? He's- and- and he's talking about a plan--

MARGARET BRENNAN: -- Not like a tourist would?

MIKE MORELL: Not like a tourist video. And then in terms of the extremism, he's- he's- he's looking at the Capitol. And he says they say that our kids are demons. However, these are the demons, what he's looking at.

MARGARET BRENNAN: So the FBI concluded he was not a threat. The 9/11 commission report concluded he was not a threat. You're saying it's clear he was Al Qaeda and living under the noses and examination of law enforcement undetected. He's now living in Saudi Arabia as we speak. That's pretty- that's a pretty big oversight by US law enforcement and intelligence. Did the CIA know about this video?

MIKE MORELL: We did not. You know, I'm 99.9% confident that we did not have this video. I was the President's briefer at the time. If somebody had shown me this video, I would have shown it to the President.



MARGARET BRENNAN: It was, as I understand it, UK officials- UK intelligence that scooped up this video?

MIKE MORELL: Yes, just so- so- so when he left the United States, he went to the UK. And after- after 9/11, the FBI discovered that he had signed- helped- helped- helped the two 9/11 hijackers get their first apartment. He- and the FBI learned that they learned that he was in the UK. So they go to the UK Government and they say- they share all this information. The British government arrests him, detains him, interrogates him, gets all this material. They say they provided it back to the FBI.

MARGARET BRENNAN: And it just stayed at the FBI.

MIKE MORELL: It looks- it looks that way.

MARGARET BRENNAN: A lot more to come on this including on 60 Minutes in the fall. Thank you so much for your analysis Mike Morell. We'll be right back.

[TRANSCRIPT ENDS] //